

⑫

EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

④⑤ Date of publication of patent specification: **09.07.86**

⑤① Int. Cl.⁴: **E 04 B 2/74, E 04 C 2/46**

②① Application number: **83300746.1**

②② Date of filing: **15.02.83**

⑤④ **Panel assembly.**

③⑥ Priority: **15.03.82 US 358277**

④③ Date of publication of application:
21.09.83 Bulletin 83/38

④⑤ Publication of the grant of the patent:
09.07.86 Bulletin 86/28

⑧④ Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH DE FR GB IT LI LU NL SE

⑤⑥ References cited:
AU-B- 432 925
DE-A-2 312 174
DE-A-2 826 336
US-A-3 998 018

⑦③ Proprietor: **Stow & Davis Furniture Company**
25 Summer Avenue, N.W.
Grand Rapids Michigan 49504 (US)

⑦② Inventor: **Propst, Paul Lewis**
16835 Oakleaf Court
Holland Michigan (US)
Inventor: **Gzym, Larry Peter**
11355 Four Seasons Drive North East
Rockford Michigan (US)
Inventor: **Murrel, Ralph**
1829 Housman, North East
Grand Rapids Michigan (US)
Inventor: **Richardson, Donald Allen**
4255 Forest Creek Drive
Kentwood Michigan (US)
Inventor: **Hinrichs, Carl Bruce**
12183 Blue Water Road
Grand Haven Michigan (US)

⑦④ Representative: **Robinson, Anthony John**
Metcalf et al
Kilburn & Strode 30 John Street
London, WC1N 2DD (GB)

Note: Within nine months from the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to the European patent granted. Notice of opposition shall be filed in a written reasoned statement. It shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid. (Art. 99(1) European patent convention).

Description

This invention relates to panel assemblies of the kind including a support structure and panel skins mounted thereon.

Modular wall panel assemblies are often used to divide a large room into a number of work areas separated by movable partitions which support both wall panels and desks. These office landscaping systems provide a relatively high concentration of work areas at relatively low cost, eliminating the need for expensive floor-to-ceiling partitions requiring permanent building modification. The work areas, which are open at their tops, can be supplied with ambient light from a common source. Further, heating, cooling, and ventilation are facilitated because of the openness of the work areas.

Typically, office landscaping systems comprise a plurality of wall panel sections, which are fastened together end-to-end. These panel sections comprise either 1) a relatively thick panel having mounting means on either end of the panel or 2) panel support frames to which are permanently secured panel skins. Consequently, the panel sections are relatively heavy, making installation and subsequent rearrangement relatively difficult. Further, the installation of electrical and telecommunications wiring in the panel sections is difficult because access may not be easily had to the panel section interiors. Examples of these systems may be seen in U.S. Patents 3,834,093, 3,831,330 and 3,802,146.

In an attempt to further modularize office landscaping systems, systems have been developed comprising a modular support assembly, in which wiring is installed, and a plurality of panel skins suspended on the support assembly after the wiring is in place. An example of such a construction comprises a plurality of tubular members interconnected by brackets having fingers which extend through the member walls. However, this support assembly does not possess the required strength under high load conditions, for example when cabinets and desks are also supported on the support assembly. The panel skins are suspended on the support assembly by brackets which extend from the panel skins and rest on angled flanges on the support assembly. This panel skin mounting arrangement is unnecessarily complex and expensive.

In other modular construction systems, the panels are suspended on a support assembly by a plurality of hooks which extend from the panels over horizontal support members. Examples of these constructions may be seen in U.S. Patents 4,128,979 and 3,948,011 and the previously mentioned U.S. patents. However, these systems do not provide any means for laterally positioning the panel with respect to the support assembly because the clips are free to move laterally with respect to the horizontal members. Consequently, aligning the panels on the support assembly is relatively difficult.

Yet another panel and frame assembly com-

prises a plurality of spring clips secured to the panel, which clips flex as the panels are installed and lockingly retain the panel on the frame. An example of this construction may be seen in U.S. Patent 3,286,412. However, due to the fact that the springs may flex laterally, this system does not precisely align the panels laterally on the support assembly.

Although other mechanisms exist for interconnecting either wall panels or wall panel support assemblies, as far as we know these brackets are insufficiently strong under all applicable loads and/or excessively expensive to fabricate and/or excessively complicated to erect.

It is an object of the present invention to solve some, at least, of these problems.

According to one aspect of the present invention, a panel assembly comprises a support structure, a wall panel and means for attaching the panel to the support structure, characterised in that the attachment means comprises plate means on the support structure, and extending therefrom, defining a plurality of vertical slots the upper edges of which are inclined downwardly and inwardly, and a plurality of attachment studs extending from the panel, each of the studs comprising a shank slidably received in one of the slots and a head coupled to the shank to retain the shank within the slot, the plate means having access means located above each slot permitting the head to pass from one side of the plate means to the other side thereof providing access to the slots for the shank whereby the wall panel is removably secured to the support means, and is drawn inwardly toward the support means as the panel is mounted thereon.

According to another aspect of the present invention, a panel assembly comprises a panel support frame including first and second spaced uprights and first and second gussets including plate support means secured to and spaced outwardly from the first and second uprights, respectively, each of the gussets defining an upwardly opening slot, the upper end of which is inclined downwardly and inwardly, a support member including a third plate support means; a connector block defining first and second slot means for slidably receiving the second and third plate support means, respectively; means for securing the second and third plate support means within the connector block to secure the frame and the support member together; a wall panel; and first and second mounting studs extending from the wall panel and secured within the gussets, each of the studs including a shank slidably positioned within one of the slots and a head connected to the shank to prevent the shank from pulling out of the slot, whereby the wall panel is drawn towards the gussets and frame as it is removably suspended on the frame.

It will be understood that, in a panel assembly constructed in accordance with the invention, the panels may be mounted on the support assembly by positioning the panels against the support assembly with each mounting stud immediately

above one of the upwardly opening slots and then lowering the panel such that each of the mounting studs is slidably secured within its associated slot. Therefore, the panel is precisely laterally positioned as it is suspended on the supporting assembly, eliminating alignment problems.

According to another aspect of the invention, a wall panel support structure comprises a first panel supporting frame means including a first secured portion spaced outwardly from the first panel supporting frame means; second panel supporting frame means including a second secured portion spaced outwardly from the second panel supporting frame means a connector block defining first and second slots in which the first and second secured portions, respectively, are slidably received; a bearing member engaging the first and second secured portions and spaced from the connector block; and means for drawing the connector block and the bearing member toward one another to secure the secured portions therebetween to secure the first and second frame means together.

Thus, adjacent panel supporting frames are rigidly secured together because the wall portions are rigidly secured within the connector block. Therefore a support assembly is provided possessing the requisite strength for virtually any office environment load imposed thereon.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the panel supporting structure includes a plurality of gussets, each of which defines one of the wall portions and a pair of the upwardly opening slots. In this embodiment, the gussets serve both as an inter-frame connecting bracket and as a support for the panel skins. This further reduces the cost and complexity of fabricating the modular assembly. Additionally, field installation is facilitated due to the relatively small number of parts involved.

The invention may be carried into practice in various ways but one panel construction assembly embodying the invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the panel construction assembly showing an L-shaped support frame with wall panels, end caps, and a corner cap supported thereon;

Figure 2 is a fragmentary view taken along plane II—II in Figure 1 with the front panels removed;

Figure 3 is a fragmentary, enlarged view of two gussets from adjacent support frames interconnected with a connector assembly;

Figure 4 is a fragmentary, sectional view of the structure shown in Figure 3;

Figure 5 is a fragmentary, sectional view taken along plane V—V in Figure 4;

Figure 6 is a fragmentary, sectional view taken along line VI—VI in Figure 3 with the connector block removed;

Figure 7 is a fragmentary, exploded view of a gusset, wall panel, and connector assembly;

Figure 8 is a fragmentary, sectional view taken along plane VIII—VIII in Figure 2; and

Figure 9 is a top plan view of the corner of the panel assembly shown in Figure 1 with the end cap removed.

Referring to Figure 1, an L-shaped panel construction is shown comprising interconnected support frames 10, inner and outer panels or panel skins 60, end caps 70, and corner cap 80. Support frames 10, shown in greater detail in Figure 2, each include a pair of vertical uprights 11 and 12, upper horizontal member 13, lower horizontal member 14, both extending between the uprights, and four gussets 20 each connecting a vertical member with a horizontal member. Gussets 20 on adjacent support frames 10 are interconnected using connector assemblies 40 to secure the frames together. A corner post 15 is positioned at the corner of the L and secured to adjacent gussets 20 also using connector assemblies 40. Panels 60 are supported on either side of the assembled frames 10 to provide planar partitions thereon. More particularly, each gusset 20 defines a pair of upwardly opening slots 28, which slidably receive studs 61 extending from panels 60 (see Figures 6 and 7). The end caps 70 are supported at either end of the L shape between facing panels 60; and the corner cap 80 covers the exterior corner so that a totally finished appearance is obtained. Normally, top caps (not shown), which are similar to the end caps 70 are installed along the upper edge of the assembly between facing wall panels 60 so that the support frames 10 are totally enclosed. The top caps are omitted from Figure 1 so that the support frames 10 may be more clearly shown.

The modular components described may be used to construct work stations, such as 1) an office station having a desk and a cabinet supported above the desk or 2) a secretary's station including a desk and typewriter attachment. These types of work stations provide totally self-contained work areas which may be easily modified or relocated after initial assembly.

Turning more specifically to the construction of the support frames 10, it is seen in Figure 2 that each support frame comprises a pair of spaced, vertical uprights 11 and 12, horizontal top member 13 extending between the uprights, and lower horizontal support member 14 also extending between the uprights. All of members 11, 12, 13, and 14 are tubular; each of members 11, 12, and 13 is generally square in cross section, while lower member 14 is generally rectangular in cross section. Gussets 20 are used to interconnect vertical uprights 11 and 12 with horizontal members 13 and 14, respectively. As seen in Figure 7, each of the gussets 20 includes a pair of spaced plate sidewalls 21 and 22 between which members 11, 12, 13 and 14 are welded as required at each of the frame corners. Additionally, if desired, the support members may be welded to one another within the gussets 20 for further rigidity. Each of the frames 10 is

supported on a base 16 (Figure 2). Suffice it to say that the base 16 includes a foot 16a, support pieces 16b secured to the underside of the horizontal member 14, and threaded members 16c extending between the foot 16a and the support pieces 16b to provide height adjustment between the horizontal member 14 and the foot 16a. Adjacent frames 10 are interconnected by placing gussets 20 from adjacent frames 10a and 10b adjacent one another and then interconnecting the gussets using connector assemblies 40.

Each gusset 20 (Figures 4 and 7) is generally U-shaped in cross section including a pair of parallel sidewalls 21 and 22 interconnected by a generally perpendicular end wall 23. Sidewalls 21 and 22 each in turn comprises a pair of spaced, parallel securing portions 21a and 22a and a pair of spaced, parallel slot-defining portions 21b and 22b, respectively. The distance between the slot-defining portions 21b and 22b is somewhat less than the distance between the securing portions 21a and 22a. Support members 11, 12, 13 and 14 of support frames 10 interfit, and are secured, between the securing portions 21a and 22a (as shown in phantom in Figure 7). The securing portions 21a and 22a and the end wall 23 are generally rectangular, while slot-defining portions 21b and 22b are generally trapezoidal including a lower edge 24 which includes upwardly from the securing portions 21a and 21b to the end wall 23. Each of the end walls 23 includes an upper edge 25 and a lower edge 26. Slot-defining portions 21b and 22b define pockets or depressions 27, which extend inwardly toward one another and in turn define the slots 28, which receive the panel supporting studs 61 (see also Figure 6). Each of the slots 28 is generally U-shaped and opens upwardly. The upper edges 29a and 29b of each slot 28 are bevelled downwardly and inwardly toward the opposite slot 28 so that studs 61 are drawn toward the centre of the gusset 20 as the panels 60 are mounted on the frames 10. Additionally, the upper edges 29a and 29b of each slot 28 are bevelled downwardly toward one another to define an upwardly opening V to facilitate insertion of the mounting studs 61 into the slots.

Each connector assembly 40 (Figures 4 and 7) generally comprises a connector block 41, bearing plate 42, and bolt 43 extending therebetween. When viewed from above (Figure 7) the block 41 has generally an H-shape comprising a central portion 46 and opposite, cross portions 47a and 47b. The central portion 46 defines a central vertical aperture 44; and the cross portions 47a and 47b define a pair of spaced, parallel slots 45a and 45b opening downwardly and extending through the block. Additionally, the four corners 48 of the block 43 are each bevelled at approximately a 45° angle. Additionally, the opening portions 49a and 49b of the slots 45a and 45b, respectively, are bevelled or flare outwardly from one another to provide a funneling effect into the slots.

The bearing plate 42 (Figures 5 and 7) is a

generally planar member defined by generally parallel sides 50 and arcuate sides 51 extending therebetween. The plate 42 defines a threaded aperture 55; and the radius of the arcuate sides 51 from the aperture 55 is equal to the distance between the aperture 55 and the sidewalls 21 and 22 in the connected assembly (see Figure 5). Additionally, two camming lobes 52 are provided opposite one another at the junction of a straight side 50 with an arcuate side 51. Consequently, the plate 42 may be positioned between adjacent gussets 20 and rotated into position with the arcuate surfaces 51 travelling along sidewalls 21 and 22 until the camming lobes 52 abut sidewalls 22b to position the plate as shown in Figure 5.

The bolt 43 is an elongated member having a hex head 53 at one end and a threaded portion 54 at its opposite end. In the assembled connector 40, the bolt 43 extends rotatably through the aperture 44 and is threadedly secured within the aperture 55 in the camming plate 52.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the interconnection of two adjacent gussets 20 using the connector assembly 40. The end walls 23 of adjacent gussets 20 are positioned within respective slots 45a and 45b of the block 41. The bolt 43 is then inserted through the aperture 44 in the block 41, and initially threaded into the aperture 55 in the plate 42. Optionally, the connector assembly 40 may be preassembled with the bolt passing through both block 41 and plate 42. In either event, the bearing plate 42 is then rotated until it reaches the position shown in Figure 5 wherein the sides 50 are generally parallel to the sidewalls 21 and 22 and wherein the camming lobes 52 abut the walls 22b. The bolt 43 is then tightened, drawing the bearing plate 42 upwardly against the lower edges 26 of the end walls 23 and drawing the connector block 41 down onto the upper ends 25 of the end walls. Consequently, the end walls 23 are forced into the slots 45 in the connector block 41 to be securely and rigidly held between the connector block and the bearing plate 42. When each of the adjacent gusset pairs is connected, the frames 10 are rigidly secured, or interconnected, together.

The panels 60 (Figures 6 and 7) are generally planar members fabricated of glass fibre reinforced plastic (fibreglass). Panels 60 may optionally be covered with fabric (not shown) to give them a particular texture and colour desired in a particular application. Of course, the panels 60 may be fabricated of other materials, for example wood. A plurality of mounting studs 61 are mounted in the rear surface of the panels 60 to be positioned within the slots 28 when the panels 60 are mounted on the frames 10. Each of the studs 61 includes a shank or shaft portion 62 having a frustoconical head 63 integrally moulded thereon. The diameter of the shaft 62 is substantially the same as the width of the slot 28. The head 63 has an outer diameter greater than the diameter of the shaft 62 to retain the stud 61 within a slot 28. A threaded portion 64 extends from the shaft 62 and is threadedly secured within the panels 60. A hex

head flange 65 extends radially from the shaft 62 adjacent the threaded portion 64 to facilitate installation of the studs 61 in the panel 60. Additionally, the studs 61 are secured within the panel 60 using adhesive or binder to strengthen the stud-to-panel connection.

Two height adjusting brackets 66 (Figures 2 and 8) are secured to the panel 60 to suspend the panel from the upper horizontal member 13. As most clearly seen in Figure 8, each bracket 66 is generally Z-shaped and comprises a securing flange 66a, a horizontal flange 66b, and a retention flange 66c. A threaded member 67 having an integral foot 68 thereon is threadedly carried within horizontal flange 66b, so that the foot rests on the horizontal member 13. The securing flange 66a is fastened to the panel 60 using screws 69. When the panel 60 is installed on the frame 10, the horizontal member 13 is located between the panel 60 and the retention flange 66c with the foot 68 resting on the horizontal member. By rotating the threaded member 67 within the horizontal flange 66b, the height of the bracket 66, and consequently of the panel 60, may be adjusted above the horizontal member 13 to precisely vertically align each panel.

Figures 2 and 9 illustrate a corner construction for the wall panel system, wherein the corner post 15 is used to join two frames 10 at right angles. The corner post 15 comprises a body portion 17, having a generally X-shaped cross section (see Figure 9), and sleeves or gussets 18 wrapped about and secured to the X-shaped body. The sleeves 18 are located at approximately the same height above the floor as the end walls 23 of the gussets 20; additionally, the sleeves 18 have approximately the same vertical extent as the end wall 23. Two frames 10b and 10c are joined at right angles by first connecting one frame to the corner post 15, interconnecting the sleeves 18 with the gussets 20 of the frame 10a using connecting assemblies 40. A second frame is then oriented generally at a right angle to the first frame 10a and secured to the corner post 15 by interconnecting sleeves 18 and gussets 20 of the frame 10b using connecting assemblies 40. The bevelled corners 48 on the blocks 41 permit a block 41 to be installed on the post 15 with the sleeve 18 positioned in the groove 45 and with the corners 48 engaging the legs of X-shaped body 17 (see Figure 9). Although only a right-angle corner assembly has been described, up to four frames 10 may be connected to the corner post 15 all generally at right angles to each other.

Finally, the end caps 70 and the corner cap 80 are generally well known to those having ordinary skill in the art. Suffice it to say that caps 70 and 80 are suspended on frames 10 as necessary to totally enclose the support frames 10.

Assembly

The modular panel assembly described may be delivered to an installation site as a plurality of components. These modular components include frames 10 having gussets 20 mounted thereon,

connector assemblies 40, panels 60, end caps 70, and corner caps 80. The support structure is first assembled by interconnecting a plurality of support frames 10 into the desired partitioning configuration. Adjacent frames 10 which are parallel to one another are connected by securing adjacent gussets from the two frames together using connector assemblies 40. Frames 10 which are oriented at right angles to one another are connected to a common corner post 15 by interconnecting the sleeves 18 on the corner post with gussets 20 on each frame.

After the frames 10 have been interconnected, panels 60 are then suspended thereon. Each panel 60 is positioned against a frame 10 with each stud 61 positioned above one of the slots 28 defined by gussets 20 and with brackets 66 positioned above upper horizontal member 13. The panel is then lowered so that the studs 61 slidably engage the slots 28, more particularly with the shaft 62 positioned within the slots and the heads 63 located within the gussets opposite the panel 60, until the feet 68 of adjusting screws 67 rest on the member 13. The heads 63 prevent the studs 61 from pulling out of the slots 28. Further, because the shafts 62 have substantially the same width as the slots 28, the studs 61 centre the panel 60 with respect to the frame 10 as the panel is lowered onto the frame. The upper edges 29 of each slot 28 guide the associated shaft 62 into the slot as the panel is lowered. Additionally, the bevelled edges 29 force the head 63 inwardly into the gusset 20 drawing the panel 60 tightly against the frame 10. The height-adjusting screws 67 are then adjusted as necessary to vertically align the panel 60 on the frame 10. Finally, the end caps 70 and the corner caps 80 are installed to enclose the frames 10, giving the wall panel system a neat and finished appearance. Optionally, a top cap (not shown) may be installed along the upper surface of the wall panel assembly to totally enclose the support structure.

Claims

1. A panel assembly comprising a support structure (10), a wall panel (60) and means for attaching the panel to the support structure, characterised in that the attachment means comprises plate means (20) on the support structure (10) and extending therefrom, defining a plurality of vertical slots (28) the upper edges of which are inclined downwardly and inwardly and a plurality of attachment studs (61) extending from the panel, each of the studs comprising a shank (62) slidably received in one of the slots (28) and a head (63) coupled to the shank (62) to retain the shank within the slot, the plate means (20) having access means located above each slot permitting the head to pass from one side of the plate means to the other side thereof providing access to the slots for the shank whereby the wall panel is removably secured to the support means, and is drawn inwardly toward the support means as the panel is mounted thereon.

2. A panel assembly according to Claim 1 in which the access means is an upward opening in the slot located at the edge of the plate means.

3. A panel assembly according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 in which the support structure comprises a frame (10) and the plate means are afforded by a plurality of gussets (20) extending from the frame, the gussets defining the slots (28).

4. A panel assembly according to Claim 3 in which each of the gussets (20) is generally U-shaped in cross section and comprises a pair of sidewalls (21, 22) and an end wall (23) extending between the sidewalls, one of the sidewalls defining one of the slots (28).

5. A panel assembly comprising: a panel support frame (10a) including first and second spaced uprights (11, 12) and first and second gussets (20) including first and second plate support means (23) secured to and spaced outwardly from the first and second uprights, respectively, each of the gussets defining an upwardly opening slot (28) the upper end of which is inclined downwardly and inwardly a support member (10b; 17) including a third plate support means (23; 18); a connector block (41) defining first and second slot means (45a, 45b) for slidably receiving the second and third plate support means, respectively; means (42, 43) for securing the second and third plate support means within the connector block to secure the frame and the support member together; a wall panel (60); and first and second mounting studs (61) extending from the wall panel and secured within the gussets, each of the studs including a shank (62) slidably positioned within one of the slots (28) and a head (63) connected to the shank to prevent the shank from pulling out of the slot, whereby the wall panel is drawn towards the gussets and frame as it is removably suspended on the frame.

6. A panel assembly according to Claim 5 in which the first and second plate support means are each a wall (23) of a gusset (20) and said third plate support means is a wall of a tubular member (18).

7. A panel assembly according to Claim 5 in which each of said first and second gussets comprises first and second sidewalls (21, 22) secured to opposite sides of one of said uprights and an end wall (23) secured between the sidewalls and extending into the connector block (41), the end wall constituting the plate support means.

8. A panel assembly according to Claim 5 or Claim 6 or Claim 7 in which the securing means comprises a bearing plate (42) abutting the second and third plate support means and spaced from the connector block (41) and means (43) for drawing the bearing plate toward said connector block to secure the second and third plate support means therebetween.

9. A panel assembly according to any of Claims 5 to 8 in which a third upright of another panel support frame (10b) is provided having a third gusset (20) including plate support means (23) secured to and spaced from said third upright; a second connector block (41) is provided having first and second slot means (45) for slidably

receiving the plate support means of the first and third gussets, respectively; and means (42, 43) for securing said first and third gussets together within said connector block.

10. A panel assembly according to any of Claims 5 to 9 in which the frame further comprises a horizontal member (13) supported by said first and second uprights (11, 12) and which includes means (66—69) for adjusting the height of the wall panel (60) with respect to the said horizontal member (13).

11. A panel assembly according to Claim 10 in which the height-adjusting means comprises a bracket member (66) extending from the wall panel (60) and over the horizontal member (13), and a generally vertically oriented threaded member (67) supported with the bracket member and engaging the horizontal member, whereby as the threaded member is rotated in first and second directions, the bracket member is shifted upwardly and downwardly with respect to the horizontal member.

12. A panel assembly according to any of Claims 5 to 11 in which each of the gusset slots (28) comprises a leading portion (29a, 29b) bevelled downwardly inwardly whereby the head (63) is drawn into the frame (10a) as the wall panel (60) is mounted thereon to draw the wall panel against the frame.

13. A wall panel support structure comprising: first panel supporting frame means (10a) including a first secured portion (23) spaced outwardly from the first panel supporting frame means; second panel supporting frame means (10b; 17) including a second secured portion (23; 18) spaced outwardly from the second panel supporting frame means; a connector block (41) defining first and second slots (45a, 45b) in which the first and second secured portions, respectively, are slidably received; a bearing member (42) engaging the first and second secured portions and spaced from the connector block; and means (43) for drawing the connector block and the bearing member toward one another to secure the secured portions (23) therebetween to secure the first and second frame means (10a, 10b) together.

14. A wall panel support structure according to Claim 13 in which at least one of the secured portions (23) constitutes an end wall extending between a pair of sidewalls (21, 22) secured to the remainder of the frame means.

15. A wall panel support structure according to Claim 14 in which at least one of the secured portions is formed by a tubular member (18).

16. A wall panel support structure according to Claim 14 or Claim 15 in which the bearing member (42) comprises a generally planar bearing plate having a first end bearing against said first secured portion (23) and a second end bearing against said second secured portion (23, 18).

17. A wall panel support structure according to Claim 16 wherein each of said bearing member ends is located between one of said pairs of sidewalls (21, 22).

18. A wall panel support structure according to

Claim 17 in which the first and second bearing member ends are generally arcuate (51) to facilitate positioning of the bearing member between the sidewalls (21, 22).

19. A wall panel support structure according to Claim 18 in which the arcuate portions (51) include cams (52) extending outwardly therefrom and engaging the sidewalls (21, 22) to prevent the bearing member from rotating.

20. A wall panel support structure according to any of Claims 13 to 19 in which drawing means (43) comprises a threaded member extending between the connector block (41) and the bearing member (42).

Patentansprüche

1. Montagewand mit einem Trägergestell (10), einer Wandplatte (60) und Einrichtungen zum Befestigen der Wand am Trägerrahmen, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Befestigungseinrichtungen am Trägergestell (10) einen Beschlag (20), der sich von diesem weg erstreckt und in dem mehrere senkrechte Schlitz (28) ausgebildet sind, deren obere Ränder nach unten und nach innen geneigt sind, sowie mehrere Befestigungszapfen (61) beinhalten, die sich von der Wand weg erstrecken, wobei jeder Zapfen einen Schaft (62), der verschiebbar in einem der Schlitz (28) aufgenommen ist, sowie einen mit dem Schaft (62) verbundenen Kopf (63) besitzt, durch den der Schaft (62) innerhalb des Schlitzes gehalten wird, wobei der Beschlag (20) oberhalb jedes Schlitzes Einlaßeinrichtungen aufweist, die das Durchdrehen des Kopfes von einer Seite des Beschlages auf dessen andere Seite ermöglichen, so daß der Schaft in die Schlitz bringbar ist, wodurch die Wandplatte lösbar am Trägergestell befestigt ist und beim Befestigen der Wand am Trägergestell nach innen auf dieses zu gezogen wird.

2. Montagewand nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Einlaßeinrichtung eine nach oben gerichtete Öffnung im Schlitz ist, die am Rand des Beschlages ausgebildet ist.

3. Montagewand nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Trägergestell einen Rahmen (10) aufweist und daß die Beschläge aus mehreren Anschlußstücken (20) bestehen, die sich vom Rahmen weg erstrecken, wobei die Schlitz (28) in den Anschlußstücken ausgebildet sind.

4. Montagewand nach Anspruch 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß jedes Anschlußstück (20) im wesentlichen einen U-förmigen Querschnitt sowie ein Paar von Seitenwänden (21, 22) und eine Endwand (23) aufweist, die sich zwischen den Seitenwänden erstreckt, wobei in jeder Seitenwand ein Schlitz (28) ausgebildet ist.

5. Montagewand, gekennzeichnet durch einen Wandträgerrahmen (10a) mit ersten und zweiten, voneinander beabstandeten senkrechten Trägersäulen (11, 12) und ersten und zweiten Anschlußstücken (20), die jeweils erste und zweite Plattenhalteelemente (23) aufweisen, die an der ersten und zweiten senkrechten Trägersäule befestigt

und von diesen nach außen beabstandet sind, wobei in jedem Anschlußstück ein nach oben hin geöffneter Schlitz (28) ausgebildet ist, dessen oberes Ende nach unten und nach innen geneigt ist, ein Trägerelement (10b, 17) mit einem dritten Plattenhalteelement (23, 18), einen Verbindungsblock (41), in dem ein erster und zweiter Schlitz (45a, 45b) ausgebildet sind, die jeweils auf das zweite und dritte Plattenhalteelement aufschiebbar sind, Elemente (42, 43) zum Befestigen des zweiten und dritten Plattenhalteelements im Verbindungsblock, um den Rahmen und die Trägerelemente fest miteinander zu verbinden, eine Wandplatte (60), einen ersten und einen zweiten Befestigungszapfen (61), die sich von der Wandplatte weg erstrecken und in den Anschlußstücken befestigt sind, wobei jeder Zapfen einen Schaft (62), der in einem der Schlitz (28) verschiebbar angeordnet ist, sowie einen Kopf (63) aufweist, der am Schaft vorgesehen ist, um zu verhindern, daß dieser aus dem Schlitz gezogen wird, wodurch die Wandplatte auf die Anschlußstücke und den Rahmen zu gezogen wird, wenn sie lösbar am Rahmen befestigt wird.

6. Montagewand nach Anspruch 5, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das erste und das zweite Plattenhalteelement jeweils eine Wand (23) eines Anschlußstückes (20) und das dritte Plattenhalteelement eine Wand eines Hohlprofiles (18) ist.

7. Montagewand nach Anspruch 5 oder 6, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß sowohl das erste als auch das zweite Anschlußstück eine erste und eine zweite Seitenwand (21, 22), die auf den gegenüberliegenden Seiten einer der senkrechten Trägersäulen befestigt sind, und eine Endwand (23) aufweist, die zwischen den Seitenwänden angeordnet ist und sich in den Verbindungsblock (41) erstreckt, wobei die Endwand das Plattenhalteelement darstellt.

8. Montagewand nach einem der Ansprüche 5—7, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Befestigungselemente eine Ankerplatte (42), die am zweiten und am dritten Plattenhalteelement anliegt und vom Verbindungsblock (41) beabstandet ist, sowie ein Element (43) aufweisen, um die Ankerplatte auf den Verbindungsblock zu ziehen, um das zweite und dritte Plattenhalteelement dazwischen zu befestigen.

9. Montagewand nach einem der Ansprüche 5—8, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß eine dritte Trägersäule eines weiteren Wandträgerrahmens (10b) vorgesehen ist und ein drittes Anschlußstück (20) mit Plattenhalteelementen (23) aufweist, die an der dritten Trägersäule befestigt und von dieser beabstandet sind, wobei ein zweiter Verbindungsblock (41) mit einem ersten und einem zweiten Schlitz (45) zur verschiebbaren Aufnahme des Plattenhalteelementes jeweils des ersten und dritten Anschlußstückes, sowie Elemente (42, 43) zum Befestigen des ersten und dritten Beschlages zusammen innerhalb des Verbindungsblockes vorgesehen sind.

10. Montagewand nach einem der Ansprüche 5—9, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Trägerrahmen weiterhin ein waagrechtes Träger-

element (13) aufweist, das von der ersten und zweiten Trägersäule (11, 12) gehalten wird und Elemente (66 bis 69) zum Einstellen der Höhe der Wandplatte (60) bezüglich des waagrechten Trägerelements (13) beinhaltet.

11. Montagewand nach Anspruch 10, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Elemente zur Höheneinstellung ein Befestigungselement (66), das sich von der Wandplatte (60) weg und über das waagrechte Trägerelement (13) erstreckt, und ein im wesentlichen senkrecht ausgerichtetes Gewindeelement (67) beinhalten, das vom Befestigungselement gehalten wird und in Eingriff mit dem waagrechten Trägerelement steht, wodurch das Befestigungselement (66) bezüglich des waagrechten Trägerelements (13) nach oben oder unten verschoben wird, wenn das Gewindeelement in eine erste oder in eine zweite Richtung gedreht wird.

12. Montagewand nach einem der Ansprüche 5—11, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß jeder der Schlitz (28) der Anschluß stücke einen Führungsbereich (29a, 29b) aufweist, der nach unten und innen abgeschrägt ist, wodurch der Kopf (63) in den Trägerahmen (10a) gezogen wird, wenn die Wandplatte (60) auf diesem angebracht wird, um sie gegen den Trägerahmen zu ziehen.

13. Wandplattenträgervorrichtung, gekennzeichnet durch, erste Plattenträgerrahmenelemente (10a) mit einem ersten Befestigungsbereich (23), der nach außen vom ersten Plattenträgerrahmenelement beabstandet ist, zweite Plattenträgerrahmenelemente (10b, 17) mit einem zweiten Befestigungsbereich (23, 18), der nach außen vom zweiten Plattenträgerrahmenelement beabstandet ist, einen Verbindungsblock (41), in dem erste und zweite Schlitz (45a, 45b) ausgebildet sind, in denen der erste und zweite Befestigungsbereich jeweils verschiebbar aufgenommen sind, ein Verankerungselement (42), das in Eingriff mit dem ersten und zweiten Befestigungsbereich steht und vom Verbindungsblock beabstandet ist, und Elemente (43) zum Zusammenziehen des Verbindungsblockes und des Verankerungselements aufeinander zu, um die Befestigungsbereiche (23) dazwischen zu befestigen, so daß die ersten und zweiten Trägerrahmenelemente (10a, 10b) fest miteinander verbunden sind.

14. Wandplattenträgervorrichtung nach Anspruch 13, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß mindestens einer der Befestigungsbereiche (23) aus einer Endwand besteht, die sich zwischen einem Paar von Seitenwänden (21, 22) erstreckt, die an den restlichen Rahmenelementen befestigt sind.

15. Wandplattenträgervorrichtung nach Anspruch 13 oder 14, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß mindestens einer der Befestigungsbereiche durch ein Hohlprofil (18) gebildet wird.

16. Wandplattenträgervorrichtung nach einem der Ansprüche 13—15, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Verankerungselement (42) eine im wesentlichen ebene Ankerplatte mit einem ersten Auflagerende auf dem ersten Befestigungs-

bereich (23) und einem zweiten Auflagerende auf dem zweiten Befestigungsbereich (23, 18) ist.

17. Wandplattenträgervorrichtung nach Anspruch 16, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß jedes Auflagerende zwischen einem der Paare von Seitenwänden (21, 22) angeordnet ist.

18. Wandplattenträgervorrichtung nach Anspruch 16 oder 17, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das erste und zweite Auflagerende im wesentlichen eine gekrümmte Fläche (51) aufweist, um das Ausrichten des Verankerungselementes zwischen den Seitenwänden (21, 22) zu erleichtern.

19. Wandplattenträgervorrichtung nach Anspruch 18, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die gekrümmte Fläche (51) einen von dieser nach außen vorstehenden Vorsprung (52) aufweist, der in Eingriff mit den Seitenwänden (21, 22) steht, um ein Verdrehen des Verankerungselementes zu verhindern.

20. Wandplattenträgervorrichtung nach einem der Ansprüche 13—19, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Zugelement (43) ein Gewindebolzen ist, der sich zwischen dem Verbindungsblock (41) und der Ankerplatte (42) erstreckt.

Revendications

1. Un assemblage de panneau comprenant une structure portante (10), un panneau de paroi (60) et des moyens pour fixer le panneau sur la structure portante, caractérisé en ce que les moyens de fixation comprennent des pièces en tôle (20) placées sur la structure portante (10) et s'étendant à partie de celle-ci, en définissant une pluralité de fentes verticales (28) dont les bords supérieurs sont inclinés vers le bas et vers l'intérieur, et une pluralité de goujons de fixation (61) s'étendant à partir du panneau, chacun des goujons comprenant une tige (62) reçue de façon coulissante dans une des fentes (28) et une tête (63) reliée à la tige (62) pour retenir celle-ci à l'intérieur de la fente, les pièces en tôle (20) comportant un moyen d'accès placé au-dessus de chaque fente en permettant à la tête de passer d'un côté de la pièce en tôle à l'autre côté de celle-ci en créant un accès aux fentes pour la tige de telle sorte que le panneau de paroi soit fixé de façon amovible sur le support et soit tiré vers l'intérieur en direction du support quand le panneau est monté sur celui-ci.

2. Un assemblage de panneau selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le moyen d'accès est une ouverture tournée vers le haut dans la fente placée sur le bord de la pièce en tôle.

3. Un assemblage de panneau selon la revendication 1 ou la revendication 2, dans lequel la structure portante comprend un châssis (10) et les pièces en tôle sont constituées par une pluralité de goussets (20) s'étendant à partir du châssis, les goussets définissant les fentes (28).

4. Un assemblage de panneau selon la revendication 3, dans lequel chacun des goussets (20) a une section droite ayant dans l'ensemble une forme de U et comprend deux parois latérales

(21, 22) et une paroi extrême (23) s'étendant entre les parois latérales, une des parois latérales définissant une des fentes (28).

5. Un assemblage de panneau comprenant: un châssis de support de panneau (10a) comportant des premier et second montants espacés (11, 12) et des premier et second goussets (20) comportant des première et seconde parties portantes en tôle (23) qui sont fixées sur et espacées extérieurement des premier et second montants respectivement, chacun des goussets définissant une fente (28) s'ouvrant vers le haut et dont l'extrémité supérieure est inclinée vers le bas et vers l'intérieur; un élément porteur (10b; 17) comportant une troisième partie portante en tôle (23; 18); un bloc de liaison (41) définissant une première et une seconde fentes (45a, 45b) recevant de façon coulissante respectivement les seconde et troisième parties portantes en tôle; des moyens (42, 43) pour fixer les seconde et troisième parties portantes en tôle à l'intérieur du bloc de liaison afin de fixer ensemble le châssis et l'élément porteur; un panneau de paroi (60); et des premier et second goujons de montage (61) faisant saillie du panneau de paroi et fixés à l'intérieur des goussets, chacun des goujons comprenant une tige (62) disposée de façon coulissante dans une des fentes (28) et une tête (63) reliée à la tige pour empêcher celle-ci d'être tirée hors de la fente, afin que le panneau de paroi soit tiré en direction des goussets et du châssis quand il est suspendu de façon amovible au châssis.

6. Un assemblage de panneau selon la revendication 5, dans lequel les première et seconde parties portantes en tôle sont chacune constituées par une paroi (23) d'un gousset (20) et ladite troisième partie portante en tôle est constituée par une paroi d'un élément tubulaire (18).

7. Un assemblage de panneau selon la revendication 5, dans lequel chacun desdits premier et second goussets comprend une première et une seconde parois latérales (21, 22) qui sont fixées sur les côtés opposés d'un desdits montants et une paroi extrême (23) qui est fixée entre les parois latérales et qui s'étend dans le bloc de liaison (41), la paroi extrême constituant la partie portante en tôle.

8. Un assemblage de panneau selon la revendication 5 ou la revendication 6 ou la revendication 7, dans lequel les moyens de fixation comprennent une tôle d'appui (42) venant buter contre la seconde et la troisième parties portantes en tôle et espacée du bloc de liaison (41) ainsi qu'un moyen (43) pour tirer la tôle d'appui en direction dudit bloc de liaison afin de fixer les seconde et troisième parties portantes en tôle entre eux.

9. Un assemblage de panneau selon une quelconque des revendications 5 à 8, dans lequel il est prévu un troisième montant d'un autre châssis de support de panneau (10b), comportant un troisième gousset (20) pourvu d'une partie portante en tôle (23) fixée sur et espacée dudit troisième montant; il est prévu un second bloc de liaison (41) comportant une première et une seconde

fentes (45) recevant de façon coulissante les parties portantes en tôle des premier et troisième goussets respectivement; et des moyens (42, 43) pour fixer ensemble lesdits premier et troisième goussets à l'intérieur dudit bloc de liaison.

10. Un assemblage de panneau selon une quelconque des revendications 5 à 9, dans lequel le châssis comprend en outre un élément horizontal (13) supporté par lesdits premier et second montants (11, 12) et qui comprend des moyens (66—69) pour régler la hauteur du panneau de paroi (60) par rapport audit élément horizontal (13).

11. Un assemblage de panneau selon la revendication 10, dans lequel les moyens de réglage de hauteur comprennent un élément d'appui (66) faisant saillie du panneau de paroi (60) et placé au-dessus de l'élément horizontal (13), et un élément fileté (67), orienté dans l'ensemble verticalement, supporté par l'élément d'appui et en contact avec l'élément horizontal de façon que, lorsque l'élément fileté est tourné dans un premier et un second sens, l'élément d'appui soit déplacé vers le haut et vers le bas par rapport à l'élément horizontal.

12. Un assemblage de panneau selon une quelconque des revendications 5 à 11, dans lequel chacune des fentes de goussets (28) comprend une partie avant (29a, 29b) inclinée vers le bas et vers l'intérieur de façon que la tête (63) soit tirée vers le châssis (10a) quand le panneau de paroi (60) est monté sur celui-ci afin de tirer le panneau de paroi contre le châssis.

13. Une structure de support de panneau de paroi comprenant: un premier châssis porteur de panneau (10a) comportant une première partie fixée (23) espacée extérieurement du premier châssis porteur de panneau; un second châssis porteur de panneau (10b; 17) comportant une seconde partie fixée (23; 18) espacée extérieurement du second châssis porteur de panneau; un bloc de liaison (41) définissant une première et une seconde fentes (45a, 45b) dans lesquelles sont reçues respectivement de façon coulissante les première et seconde parties fixées; un élément d'appui (42) en contact avec les première et seconde parties fixées et espacé du bloc de liaison; et un moyen (43) pour tirer le bloc de liaison et l'élément d'appui l'un vers l'autre afin de bloquer entre eux les parties fixées (23) afin de fixer ensemble les premier et second châssis (10a, 10b).

14. Une structure de support de panneau de paroi selon la revendication 13, dans laquelle au moins une des parties fixées (23) constitue une paroi extrême s'étendant entre deux parois latérales (21, 22) fixées sur le reste du châssis.

15. Une structure de support de panneau de paroi selon la revendication 14, dans laquelle au moins une des parties fixées est formée par un élément tubulaire (18).

16. Une structure de support de panneau de paroi selon la revendication 14 ou la revendication 15, dans laquelle l'élément d'appui (42) comprend une tôle d'appui plane des l'ensemble et

comportant une première extrémité s'appuyant contre ladite première partie fixée (23) et une seconde extrémité s'appuyant contre ladite seconde partie fixée (23, 18).

17. Une structure de support de panneau de paroi selon la revendication 16, dans laquelle chacune desdites extrémités d'élément d'appui est placée entre les parois latérales (21, 22) de ladite paire.

18. Une structure de support de panneau de paroi selon la revendication 17, dans laquelle la première et la seconde extrémités d'élément d'appui sont incurvées dans l'ensemble (51) afin

de faciliter le positionnement de l'élément d'appui entre les parois latérales (21, 22).

19. Une structure de support de panneau de paroi selon la revendication 18, dans laquelle les parties incurvées (51) comprennent des cames (52) faisant saillie extérieurement de celle-ci et entrant en contact avec les parois latérales (21, 22) pour empêcher l'élément d'appui de tourner.

20. Une structure de support de panneau de paroi selon une quelconque des revendications 13 à 19, dans laquelle un moyen de tirage (43) comprend un élément fileté s'étendant entre le bloc de liaison (41) et l'élément d'appui (42).

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

60

65

10







